

COMICO

four issue mini-series



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JUSTICE MACHINE

FEATURING THE

Elementals



COMICO THE COMIC COMPANY

DARKFORCE TRIUMPHANT

COMICO

four issue mini-series

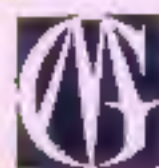


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DARKFORCE TRIUMPHANT



EDITORIAL

So, the Justice Machine and the Elementals are down for the count, huh? Don't bet on it.

Darkforce and the invading horde of interdimensional demons are mere moments away from their inevitable conquest of Georwell? Again, don't bet on it.

Bill Willingham will write next issue's editorial? Don't count him out, but when you produce as many mind-blowing pages of panoramic penciling each month as Bill does, one must expect such things as eating, sleeping, and editorializing to occasionally be squeezed out of the daily routine. I, for one, am pleased as punch just to have the man scripting this mini-series.

So, what *can* you bet on next issue, the final episode in our pulse-pounding, galactic drama? More action, mayhem, and table-turning surprises than you can shake an Uru hammer at, that's what!

But, for the moment, let's talk about some of the other people working on this book. **Bob Pinaha**, for example, is the fellow responsible for lettering not only this series, but virtually all of Comico's books. Bob has the integrity and loyalty that most publishers wish all their employees had. Let me tell you, when you're run-

ning late and the deadline was yesterday, send the job to Bob and it'll be back on your desk the day *before* yesterday! Not only that, but the style and precision he lavishes upon his work are just amazing. He really helps make a page stand out. If you don't believe me, look at a current issue of ELEMENTALS or MAGE for further verification.

If Bob Pinaha is a first-rate letterer, then **Tom Vincent** is easily his equal in the coloring department. Since we work so far in advance, I've yet to actually see Tom's handling of JM, but his work on ROBOTECH MASTERS and THE MACROSS SAGA is just incredible. I originally met Tom when I was up at the Comico offices for the initial JM contract negotiations. At the time, while I had a certain look in mind for JM's revival, and knew what the black-and-white art would look like, I had yet to find a colorist who pleased me. I really didn't know Tom or his work then, but when he pulled out some of his samples, I nearly had a heart attack! Someone upstairs had apparently been listening to my artistic prayers. Perhaps the only person who's more excited than I am about seeing the published product is Tom himself!


And who is it that organizes this whole shebang, making sure that everyone gets their assignments done and their paychecks on time? **Diana Schutz** — that's who — a nicer editor you'll never meet, unless you miss your deadlines, that is. Boy, she sure can be a nag when your pages have been "in the mail" for over a week, but then, that's her job, and she does it with great patience and fortitude.

Finally, where would we be without art director **Gerry Giovinco** calling me up every once in a while to say, "This arm is too long!" or "Why did you draw Challenger with squirt guns in this panel?" Sometimes he even calls to say, "Hey, that's a great cover you did for issue #3! Keep it up!" To show you what a talented guy he is and that he knows what he's talking about (no, that arm is *not* too long, Gerry), take a look at his terrific JM letters page logo elsewhere in this book. Pretty hot stuff, I must say!

There are a lot of other people involved in this ongoing project, but what say we save a few of those for another time?

Next issue, guess who writes. Go on, I dare you!

—Mike Gustovich



GEORWELL, THE SEAT OF A SMALL INTERPLANETARY EMPIRE, IN ANOTHER DIMENSION. IT IS A PLANET UNDER SIEGE.

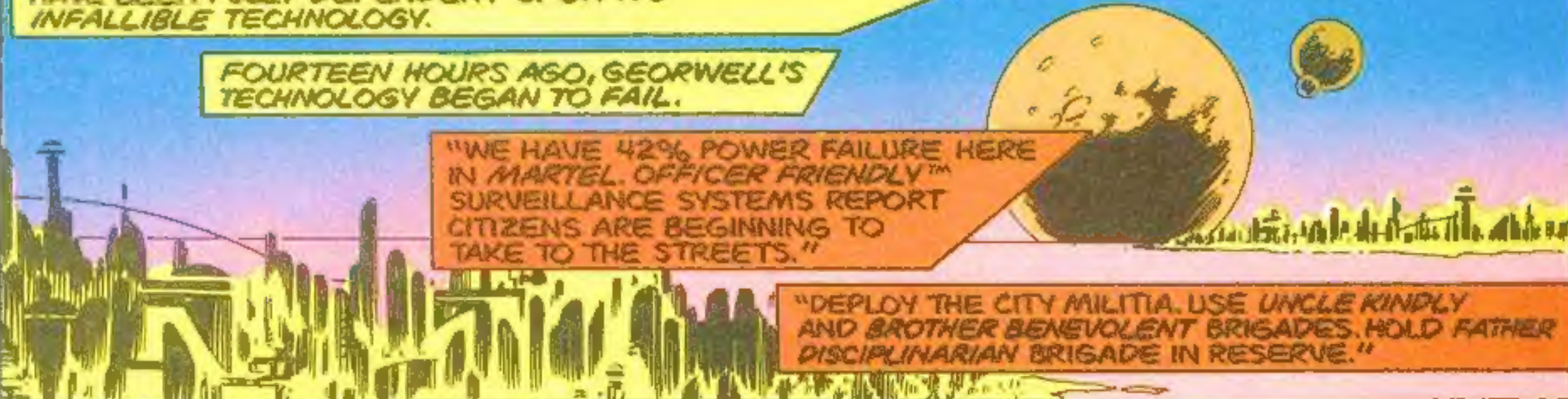
"TULL CITY REPORTS 93% POWER SYSTEMS FAILURE. THERE IS PANIC THROUGHOUT ALL SECTIONS, WITH SCATTERED LOOTING.

"VANGUARD CITY-PLEX REPORTS 100% OF ALL PUBLIC POWER SYSTEMS ARE DOWN. THERE ARE NOMINAL EMERGENCY SYSTEMS. WIDESPREAD RIOTING IS REPORTED THROUGHOUT.

"WEATHER CONTROL IN ECLIPSE CITY HAS FAILED COMPLETELY. THERE ARE TORRENTIAL RAINS AND FLOODING. CASUALTIES ARE ALREADY ESTIMATED AT 12.5% OF POPULACE."

FOR GENERATIONS, GEORWELL'S EIGHT BILLION INHABITANTS HAVE BEEN FULLY DEPENDENT UPON ITS INFALLIBLE TECHNOLOGY.

FOURTEEN HOURS AGO, GEORWELL'S TECHNOLOGY BEGAN TO FAIL.




"WE HAVE 42% POWER FAILURE HERE IN MARTEL. OFFICER FRIENDLY™ SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS REPORT CITIZENS ARE BEGINNING TO TAKE TO THE STREETS."

"DEPLOY THE CITY MILITIA. USE UNCLE KINDLY AND BROTHER BENEVOLENT BRIGADES. HOLD FATHER DISCIPLINARIAN BRIGADE IN RESERVE."



RETURN TO YOUR HOMES! RETURN TO YOUR HOMES!

ALL IS UNDER CONTROL!



THIS IS THE MILITIA! ANYONE OUTSIDE THEIR HOMES WILL BE ARRESTED!

THE CITADEL OF JUSTICE.



I ACCUSE!

I ACCUSE YOU--
MONOLITH, MORNINGSTAR,
VORTEX, AND FATHOM, MEMBERS
OF THE TERRORIST GROUP,
ELEMENTALS--OF ACTS OF
REBELLION...

REBELLION?!
HOW CAN WE REBEL
AGAINST A SOCIETY
WE DON'T BELONG
TO?

...ACTS OF
REBELLION AND
SABOTAGE AGAINST
THE FREE REPUBLIC
OF GEORWELL.

YOUR ACTIONS HAVE
CAUSED THE RELEASE OF THE
PRISONER, DARKFORCE, WHO IS
ACCESSING AND RE-ROUTING POWER
SYSTEMS WORLDWIDE-- RESULTING
IN PANIC, RIOTING, AND THE DEATHS
OF OVER TWO THOUSAND CITIZENS
AND NEARLY THREE MILLION
SUB-CITIZENS.

WE DID CAUSE
THE RELEASE OF
DARKFORCE, BUT WE HAVE
NOTHING TO DO WITH ANY
KILLING HERE! ALL WE WANTED
WAS TO RESCUE A FREEDOM
FIGHTER FROM AN
OPPRESSIVE
DICTATORSHIP!

WE HAD
NO IDEA
DARKFORCE
WOULD DO
THIS!

LIARS! IF
YOU'VE CAUSED ANY
HARM TO COME TO MY
FAMILY, YOU'LL NEVER
GET A CHANCE TO
STAND TRIAL!

QUIET, TITAN!

THIS
INTERROGATION
IS BEING
RECORDED.

PULSE,
RESPIRATION, AND
VOICE TREMORS ALL
INDICATE THAT THEY
AREN'T LYING. THEY
REALLY BELIEVE
WHAT THEY'RE
SAYING.

CHAPTER THREE:

The POWERPLAY AFFAIR

WRITTEN BY
BILL WILLINGHAM

CREATED AND
ILLUSTRATED BY
MIKE GUSTOVICH

COLORS:
TOM VINCENT

LETTERS:
BOB PINAHA

EDITS:
DIANA SCHUTZ



LISTEN...WE DIDN'T KNOW
WHAT...THIS GUY YOU CALL
DARKFORCE-- WE DIDN'T
KNOW WHAT HE WAS
GOING TO DO.



WE AREN'T
FROM GEORWELL.
I DON'T EVEN
THINK WE'RE
FROM THIS
DIMENSION.

WE'RE FROM
A PLANET CALLED
EARTH.



"THERE, WE WERE THE HEROES!"



"ON EARTH, WE WERE LIKE
YOUR JUSTICE MACHINE,
HERE."



"WE WERE CREATED TO
DEFEAT A MAN-- A
POWERFUL SORCERER
NAMED SAKER. HE
WANTED TO DESTROY
OUR WORLD, JUST LIKE
YOU SAY DARKFORCE
IS TRYING TO DO.

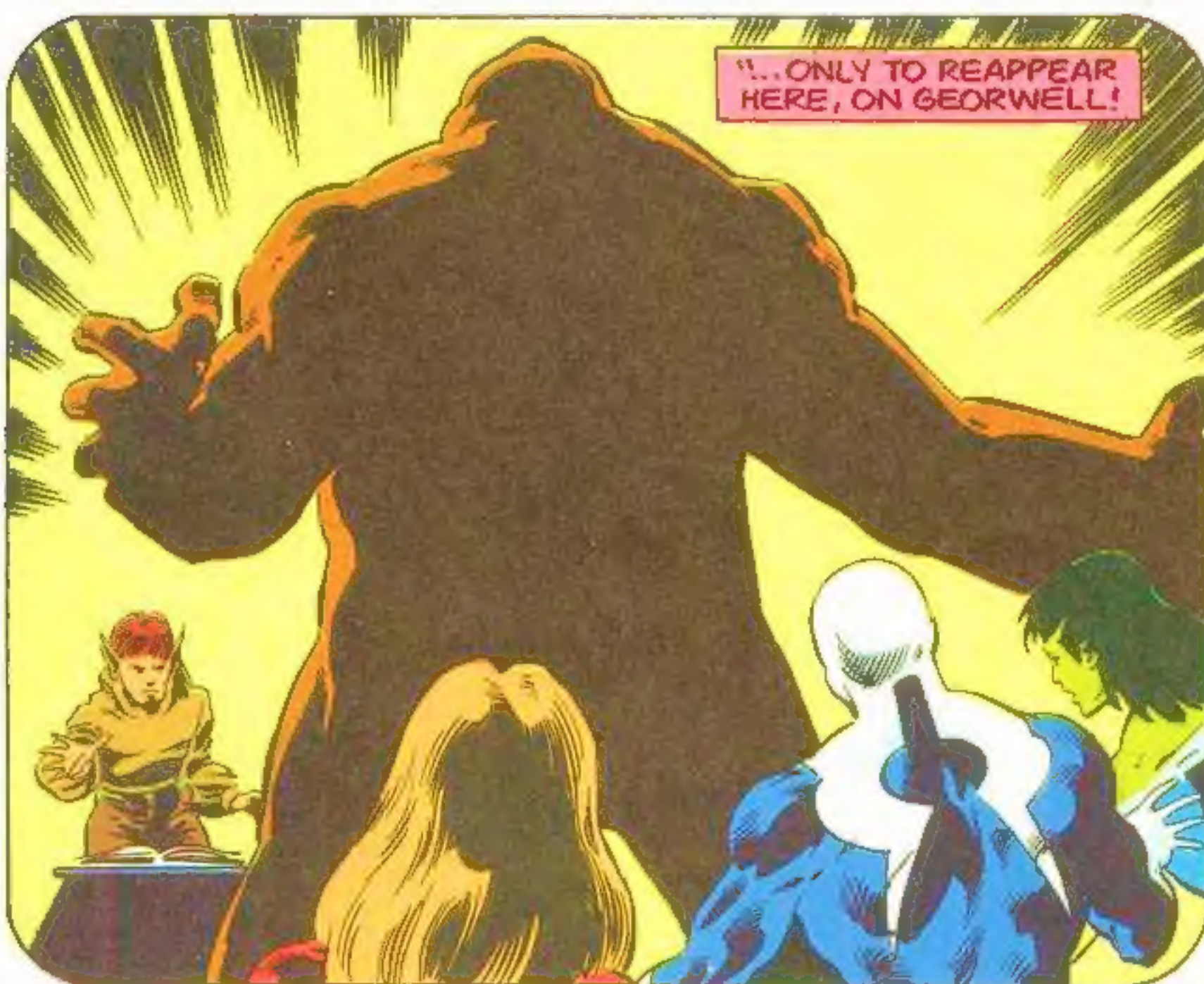
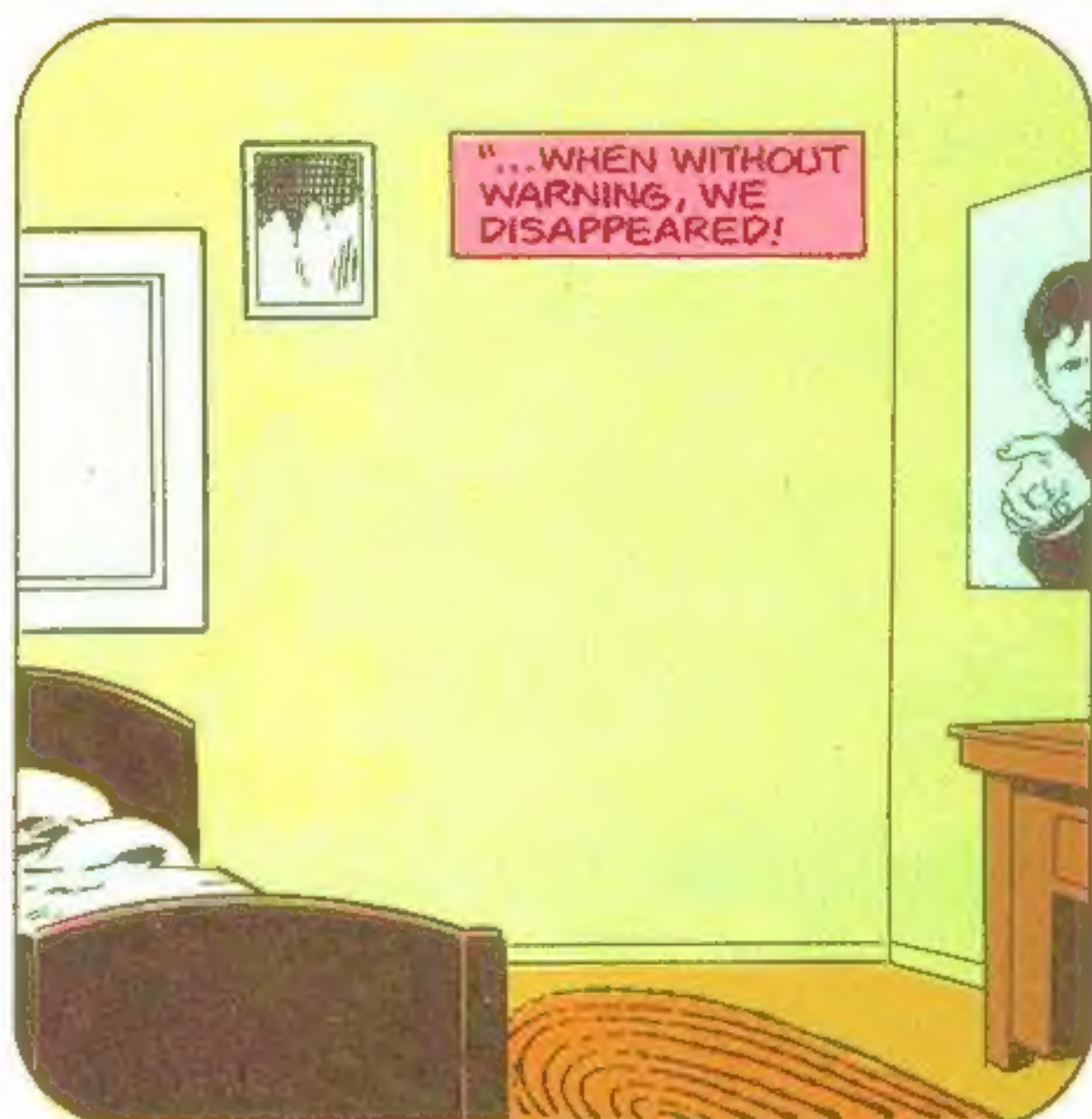


"WE WERE ABLE
TO STOP
SAKER.

"IF YOU LET US,
WE CAN HELP
YOU STOP
DARKFORCE."



TOMMY IS RIGHT.
LET US CLEAN UP
OUR OWN
MESSSES.



"DARKFORCE WAS DESCRIBED TO US AS A LIBERATOR, A LEADER WHO HAD THE TRUE SUPPORT OF THE PEOPLE OF GEORWELL."

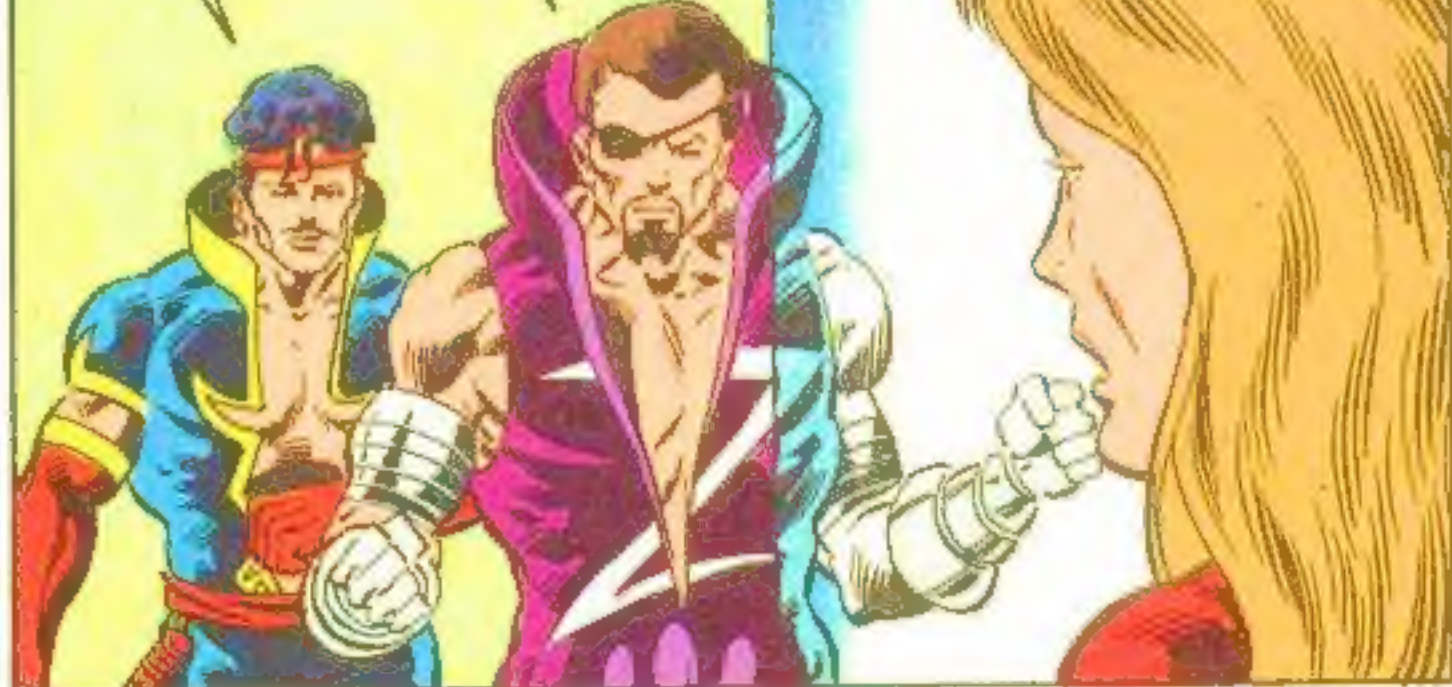


"HE WAS GOING TO LEAD GEORWELL TO FREEDOM. HE WANTED TO DO AWAY WITH YOUR SECRET POLICE AND ENFORCERS LIKE YOUR SO-CALLED JUSTICE MACHINE."

NOW JUST A MINUTE, GIRLIE...

SHUT UP, DEMON!

WE WERE TOLD ALL ABOUT HOW THE JUSTICE MACHINE KEEPS THE PEACE ON GEORWELL...



"...INNOCENT PEOPLE, WOMEN AND CHILDREN, GUNNED DOWN TO KEEP ORDER..."



LYING SHREW!





THE MACHINE HAS NEVER KILLED AN INNOCENT CITIZEN!

DEMON! CALM DOWN!

SILENCE, CRETIN!



IF HE CANNOT CONTROL HIMSELF IN PUBLIC, REMOVE HIM!

WE EVEN PROTECTED SUB-CITIZENS.



I BELIEVE THE PRISONERS HAVE GIVEN US ENOUGH INFORMATION TO ENSURE A CONVICTION ON ALL COUNTS.

REPORT TO PHYSICAL TRAINING, DEMON.



AS A MATTER OF FACT, MACHINERS, I THINK WE COULD ALL USE A SESSION TO WORK OUT OUR AGGRESSIONS.

EVERYONE TO THE TRAINING ROOM.



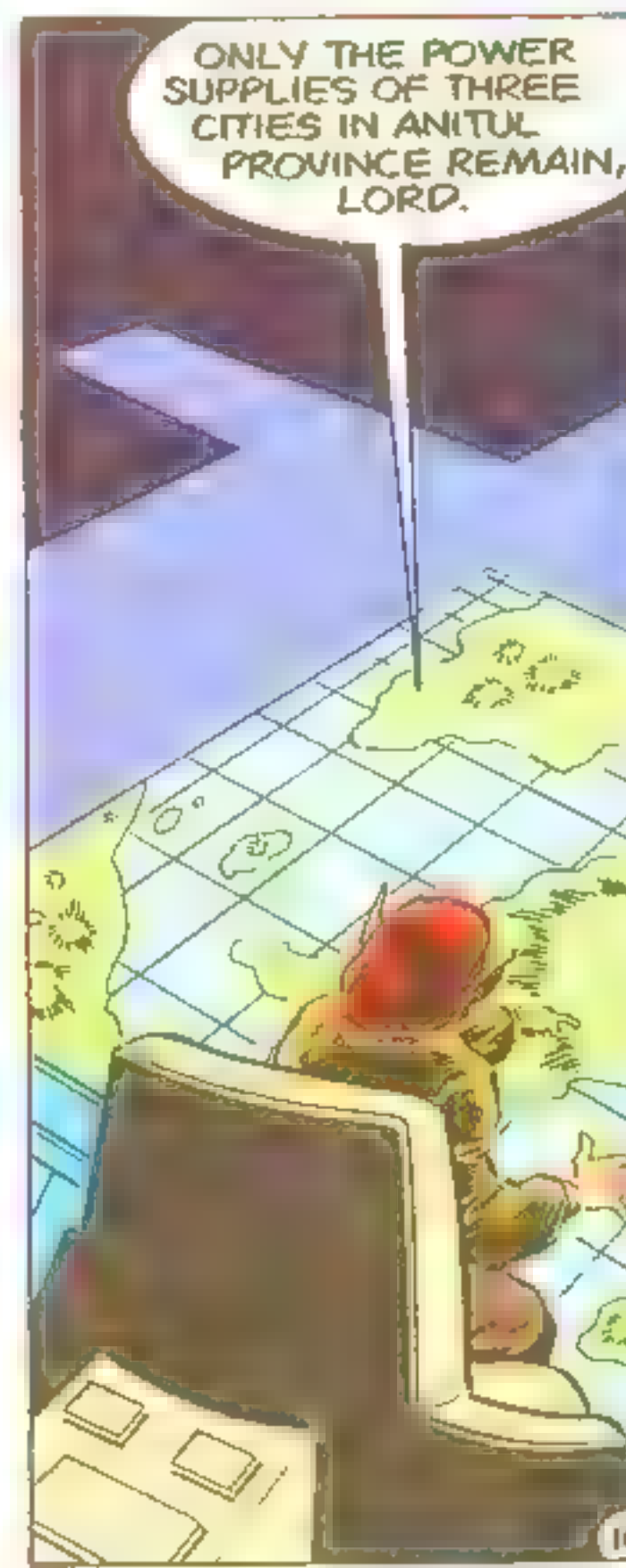
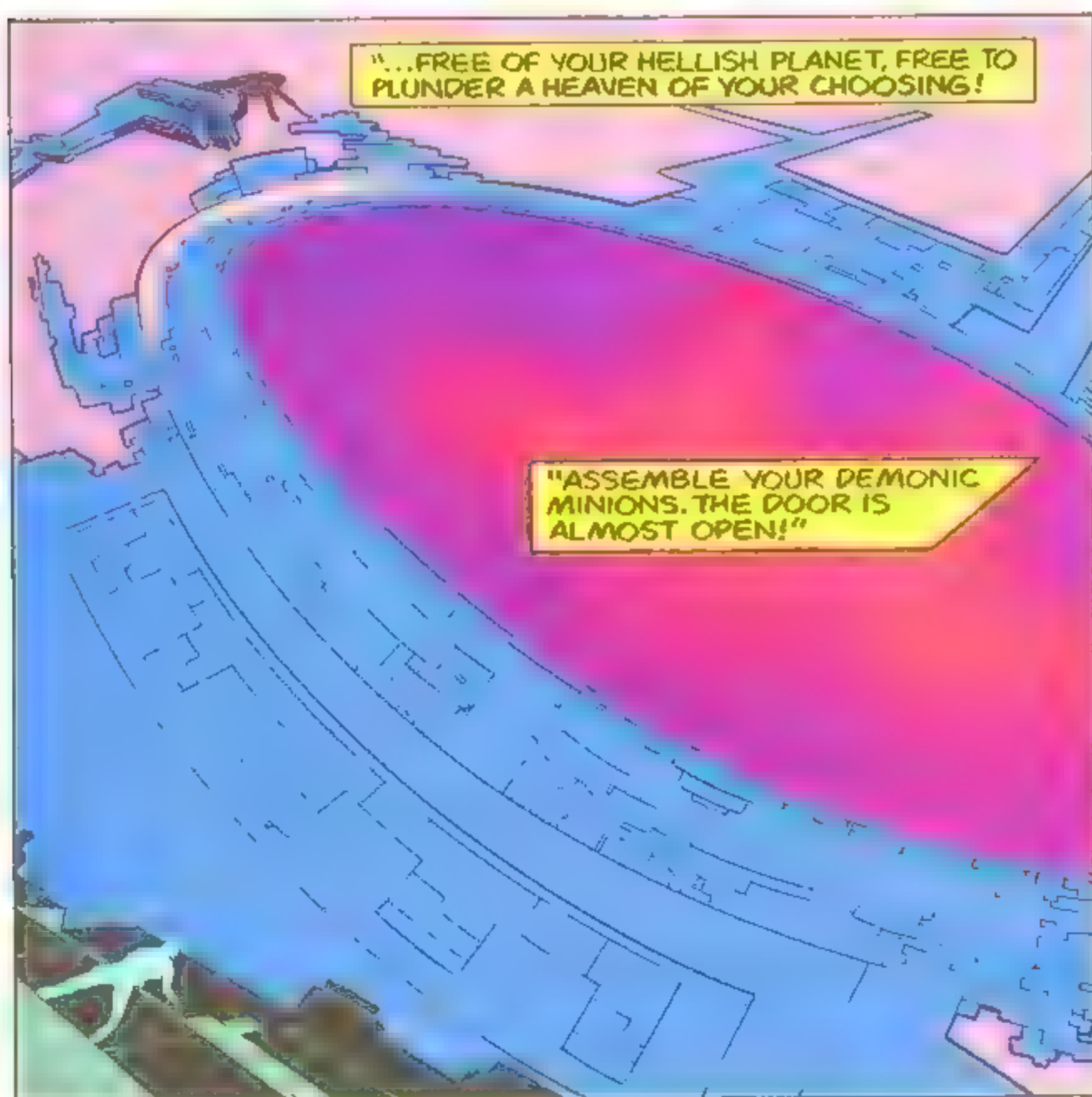
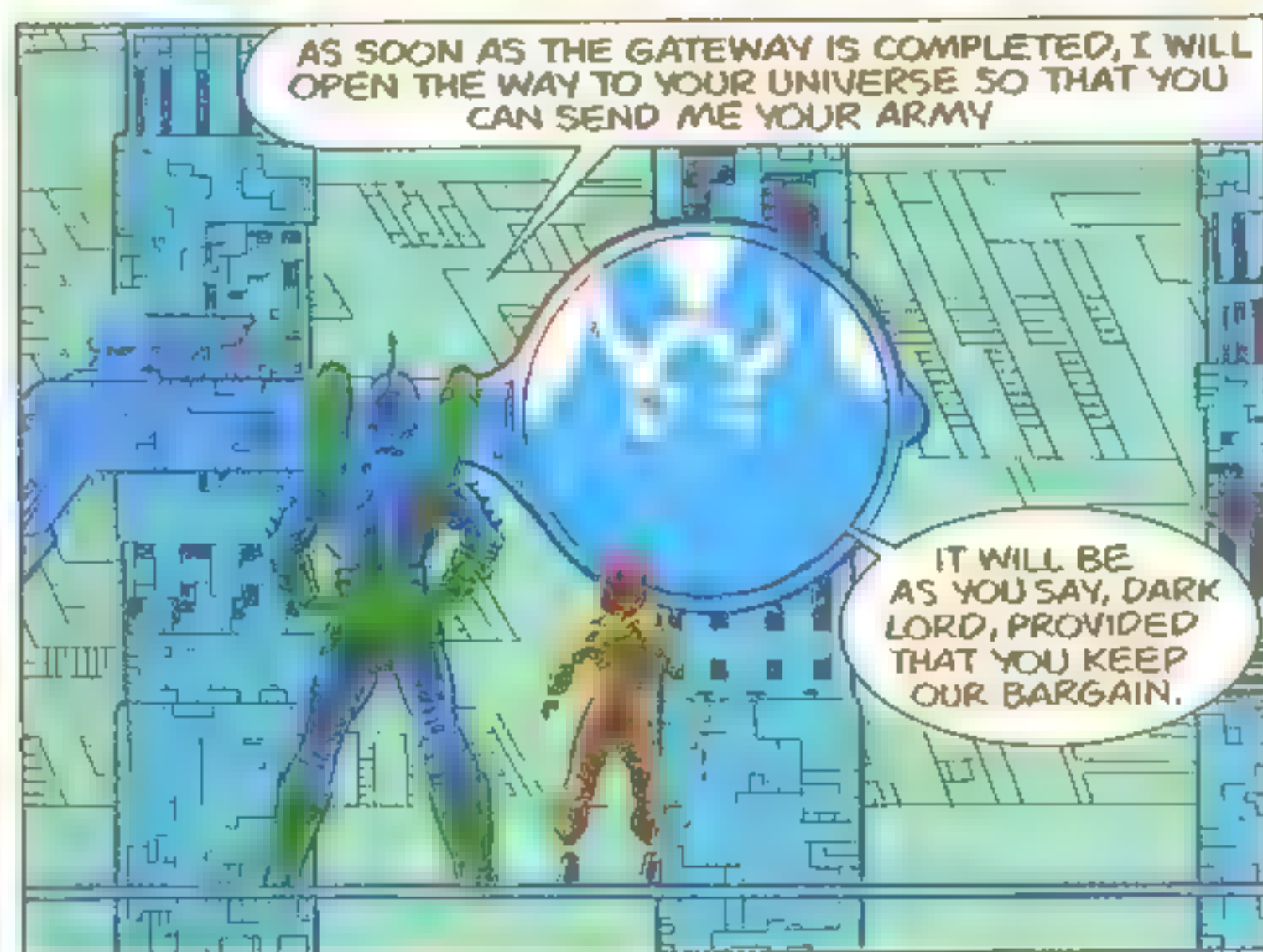
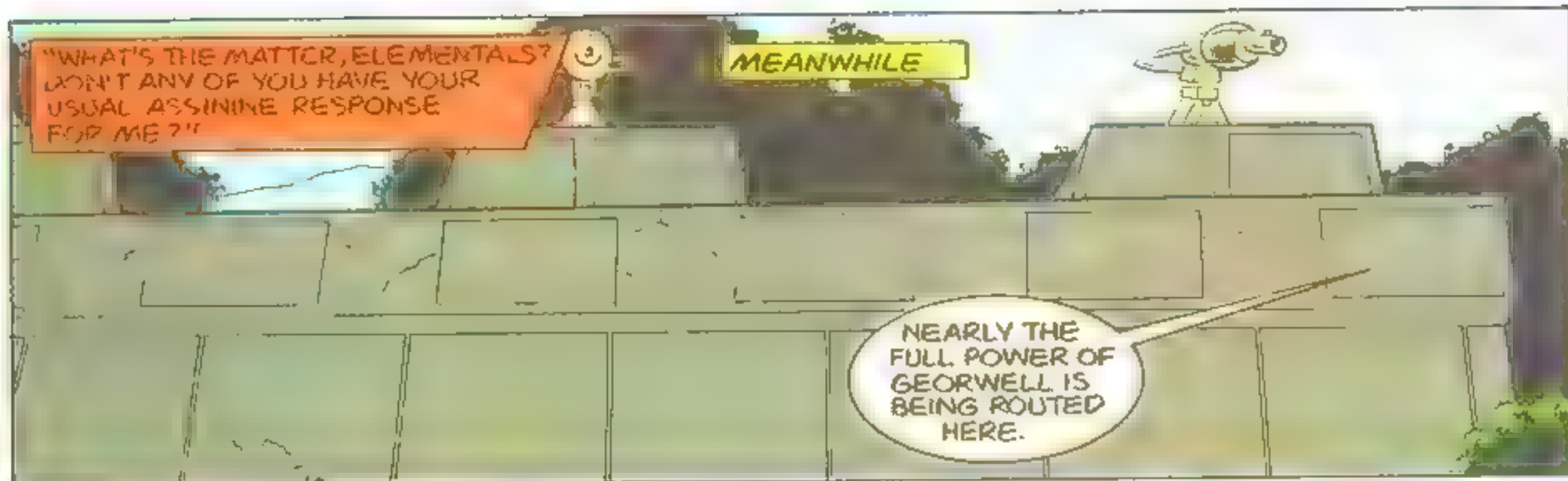
WE HAVE THE LATEST CASUALTY FIGURES, SIR.

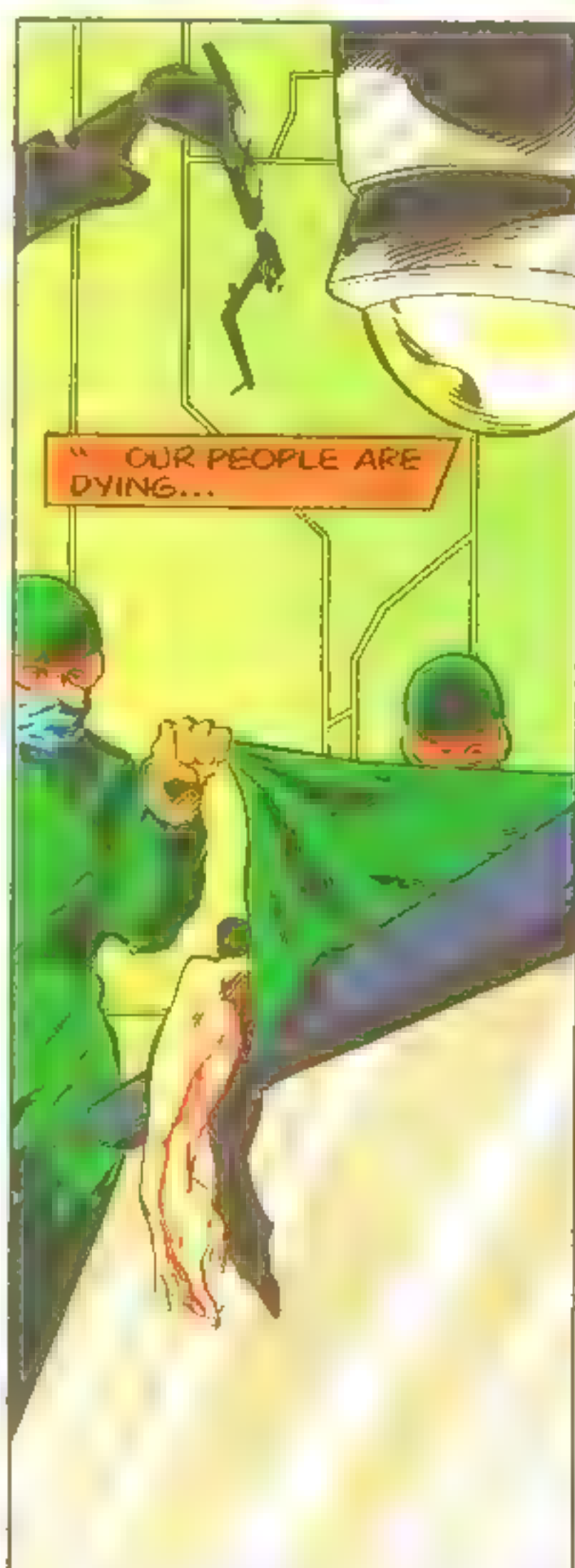
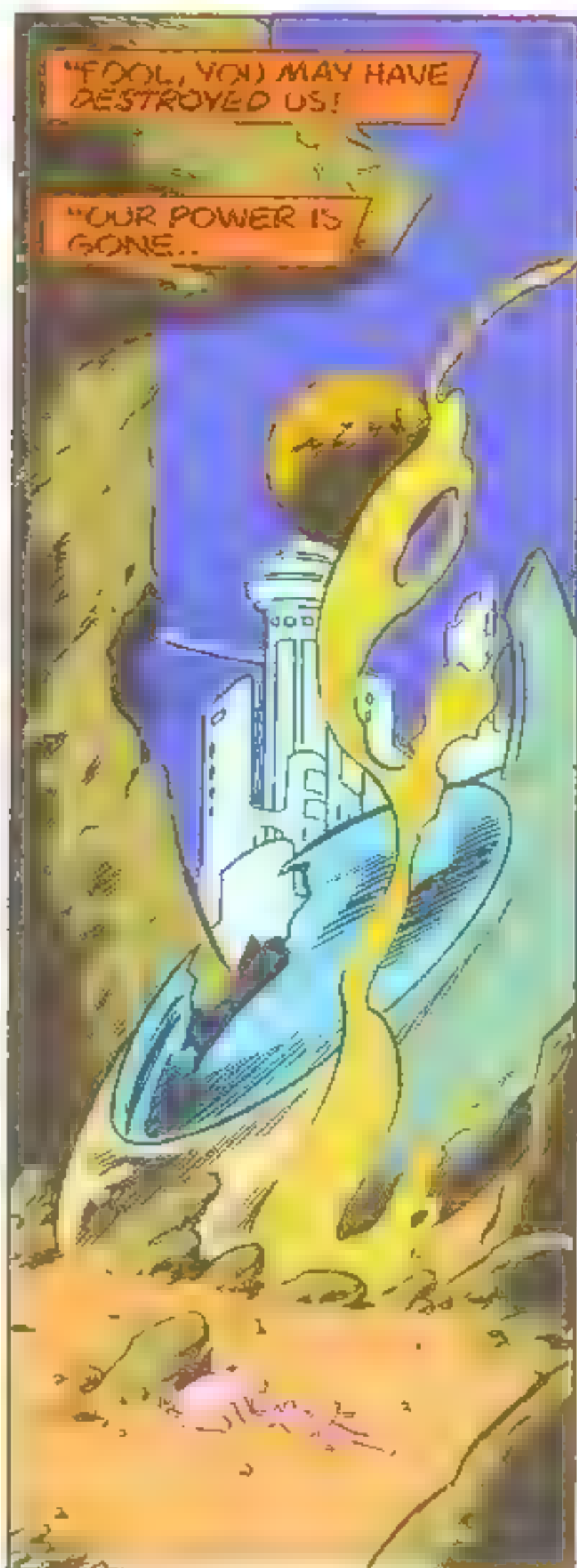
CITIZENS: FOUR THOUSAND-PLUS DEAD, THIRTEEN THOUSAND-PLUS INJURED. SUB-CITIZENS: TWELVE MILLION-PLUS DEAD, INJURED, OR UNACCOUNTED FOR

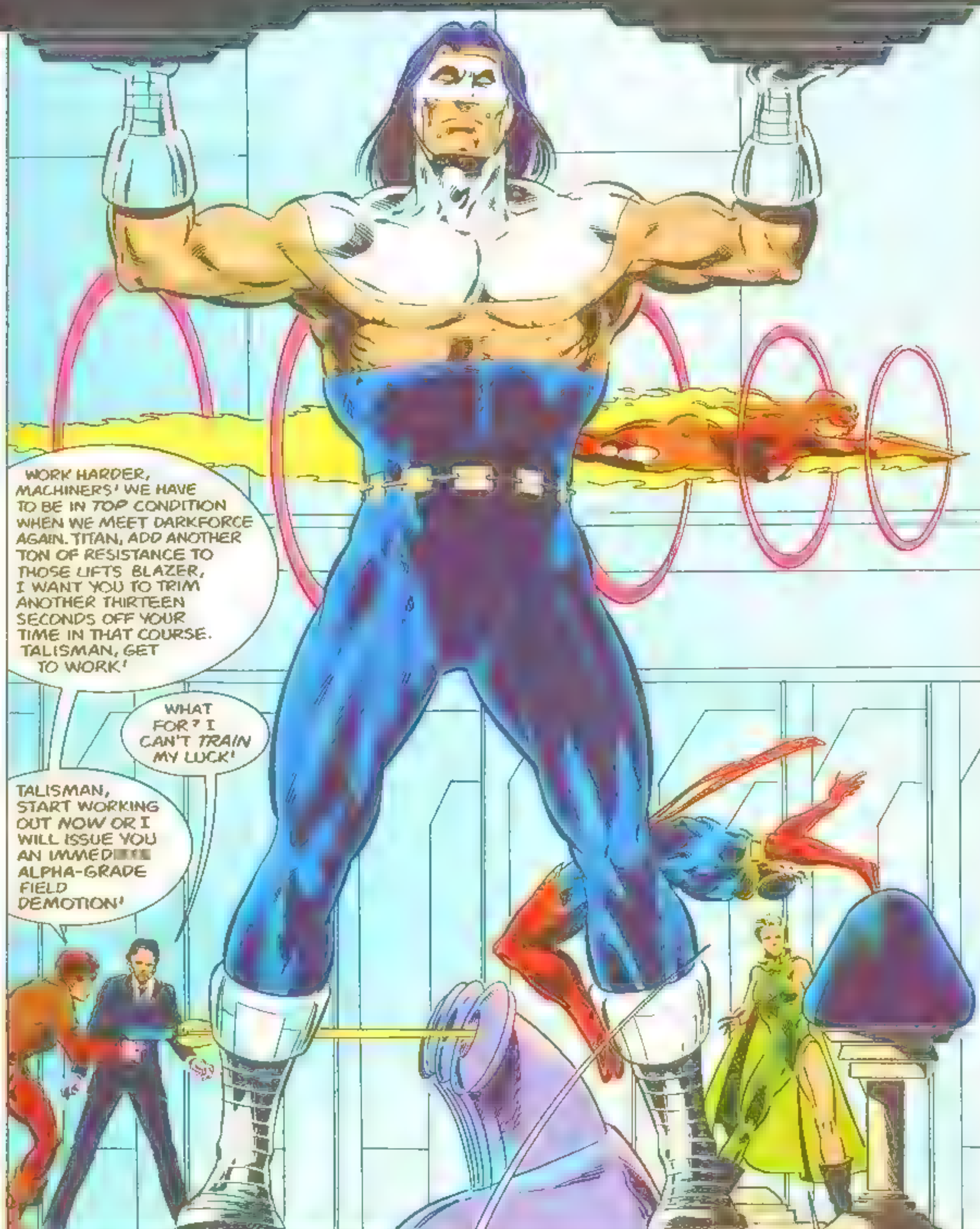


SEE WHAT HAPPENS, ELEMENTALS WHEN YOU TRY TO INTERFERE? WHEN YOU IMPOSE YOUR BIASED CONCEPTS OF GOOD AND EVIL ON OUR ORDERED SOCIETY?!

IT SEEMS THE ONLY FREEDOMS YOU OFFER US ARE THE FREEDOMS OF THE AFTERLIFE!







WORK HARDER, MACHINERS! WE HAVE TO BE IN TOP CONDITION WHEN WE MEET DARKFORCE AGAIN. TITAN, ADD ANOTHER TON OF RESISTANCE TO THOSE LIFTS. BLAZER, I WANT YOU TO TRIM ANOTHER THIRTEEN SECONDS OFF YOUR TIME IN THAT COURSE. TALISMAN, GET TO WORK!

WHAT FOR? I CAN'T TRAIN MY LUCK!

TALISMAN, START WORKING OUT NOW OR I WILL ISSUE YOU AN IMMEDIATE ALPHA-GRADE FIELD DEMOTION!

IN CASE YOU'RE NOT UP ON YOUR REGS, TALISMAN, THAT MEANS DEATH BY FIRING SQUAD-- FOR WHICH I WILL HAPPILY VOLUNTEER!

CHALLENGER?

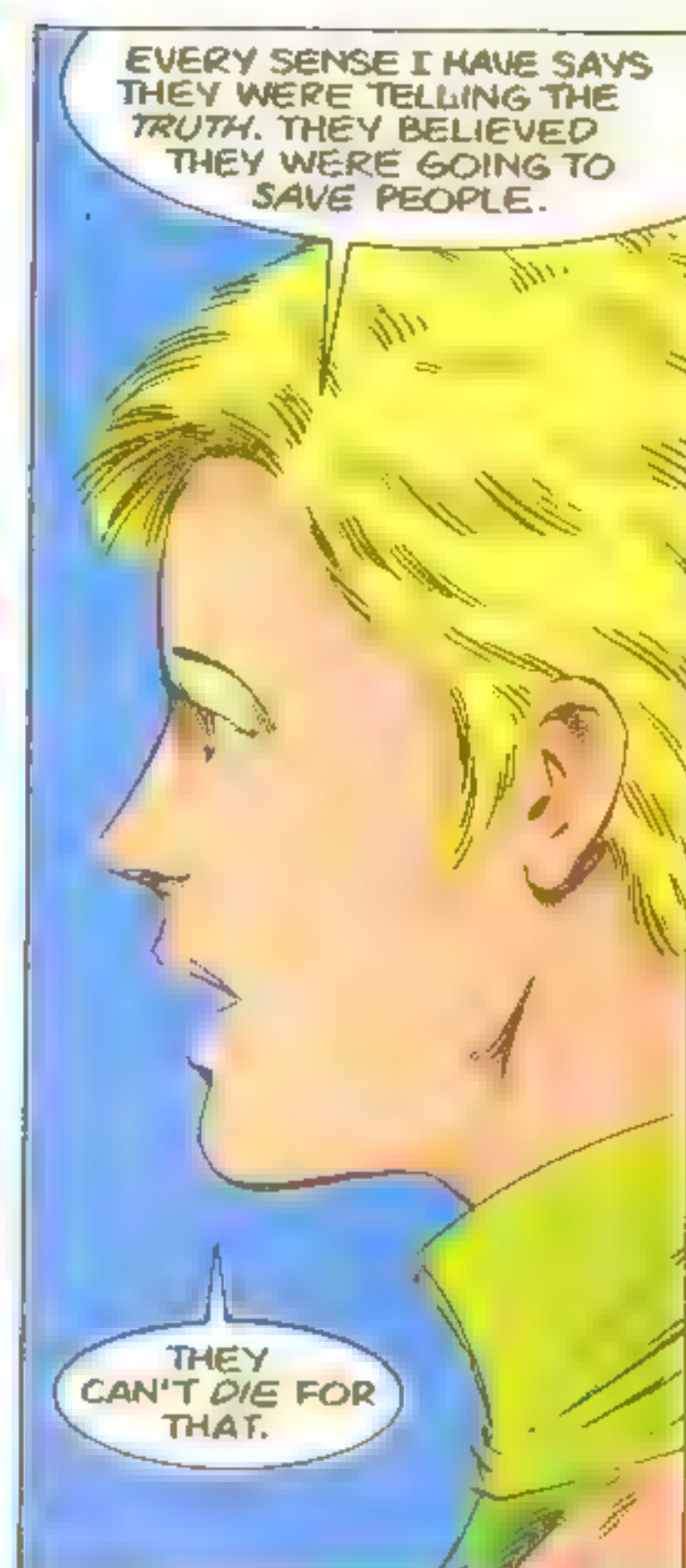


CHALLENGER,
WE HAVE TO
TALK.

IT WILL
HAVE TO WAIT.
THIS IS VITAL
TO...

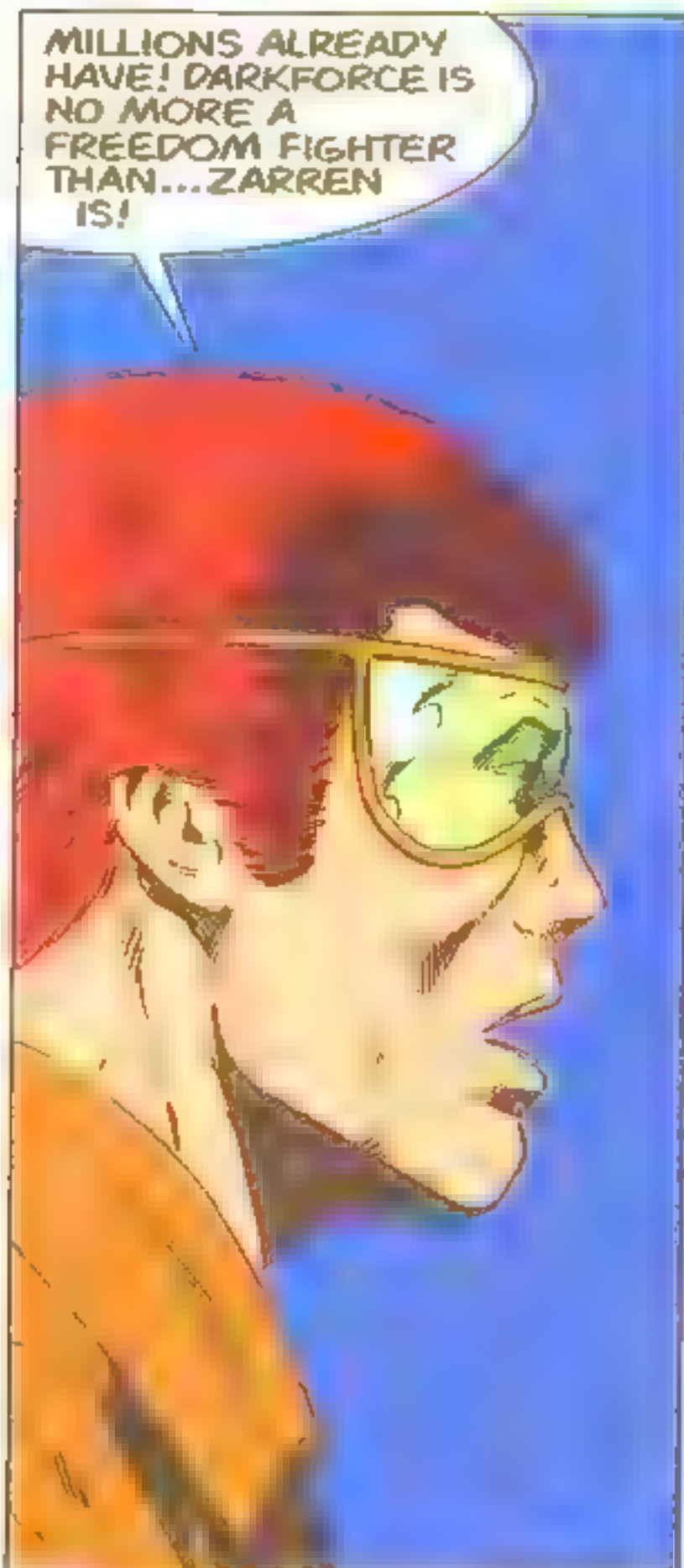


NO, IT
WON'T WAIT,
CHALLENGER.
IT'S ABOUT THE
ELEMENTALS.



EVERY SENSE I HAVE SAYS
THEY WERE TELLING THE
TRUTH. THEY BELIEVED
THEY WERE GOING TO
SAVE PEOPLE.

THEY
CAN'T DIE FOR
THAT.



MILLIONS ALREADY
HAVE! DARKFORCE IS
NO MORE A
FREEDOM FIGHTER
THAN...ZARREN
IS!

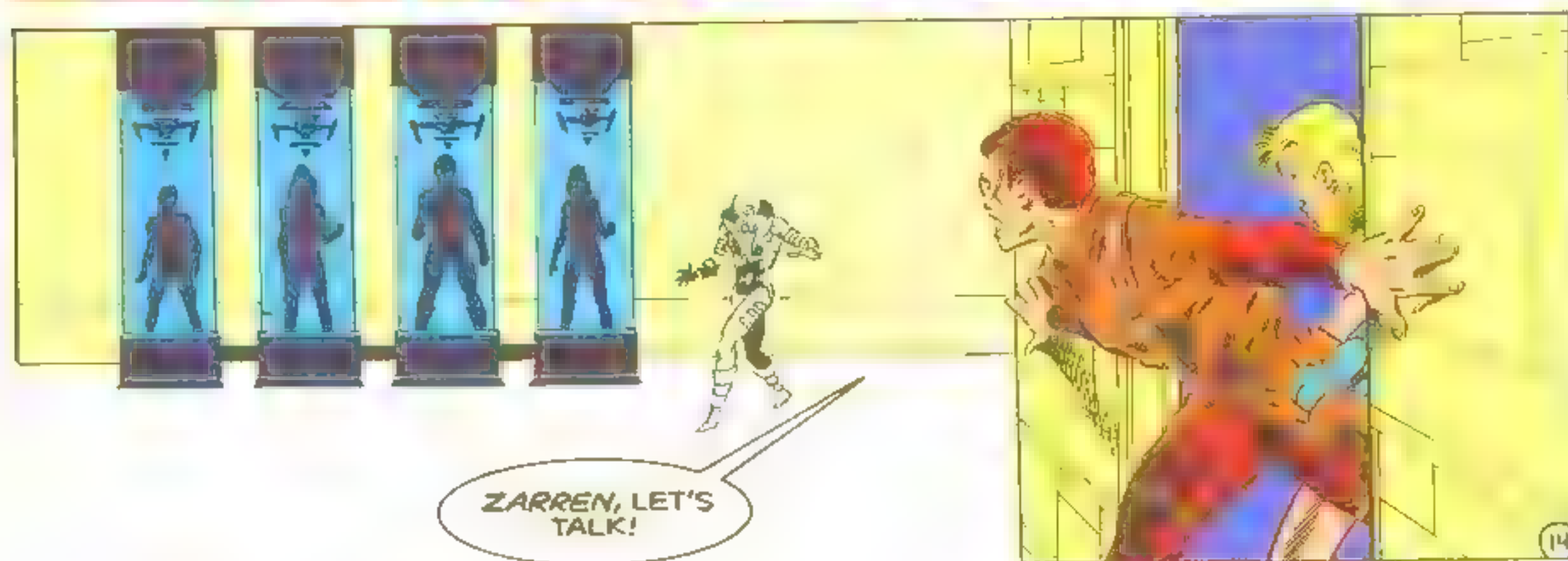
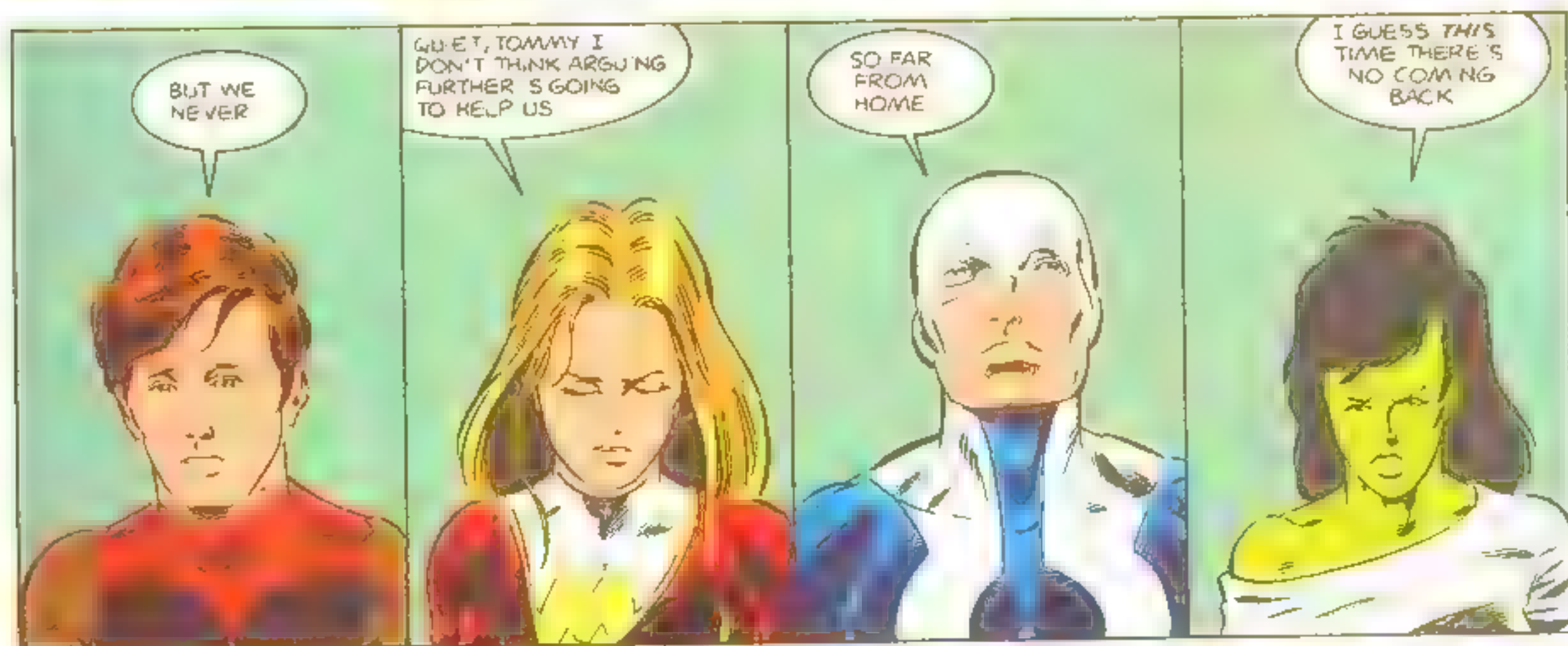
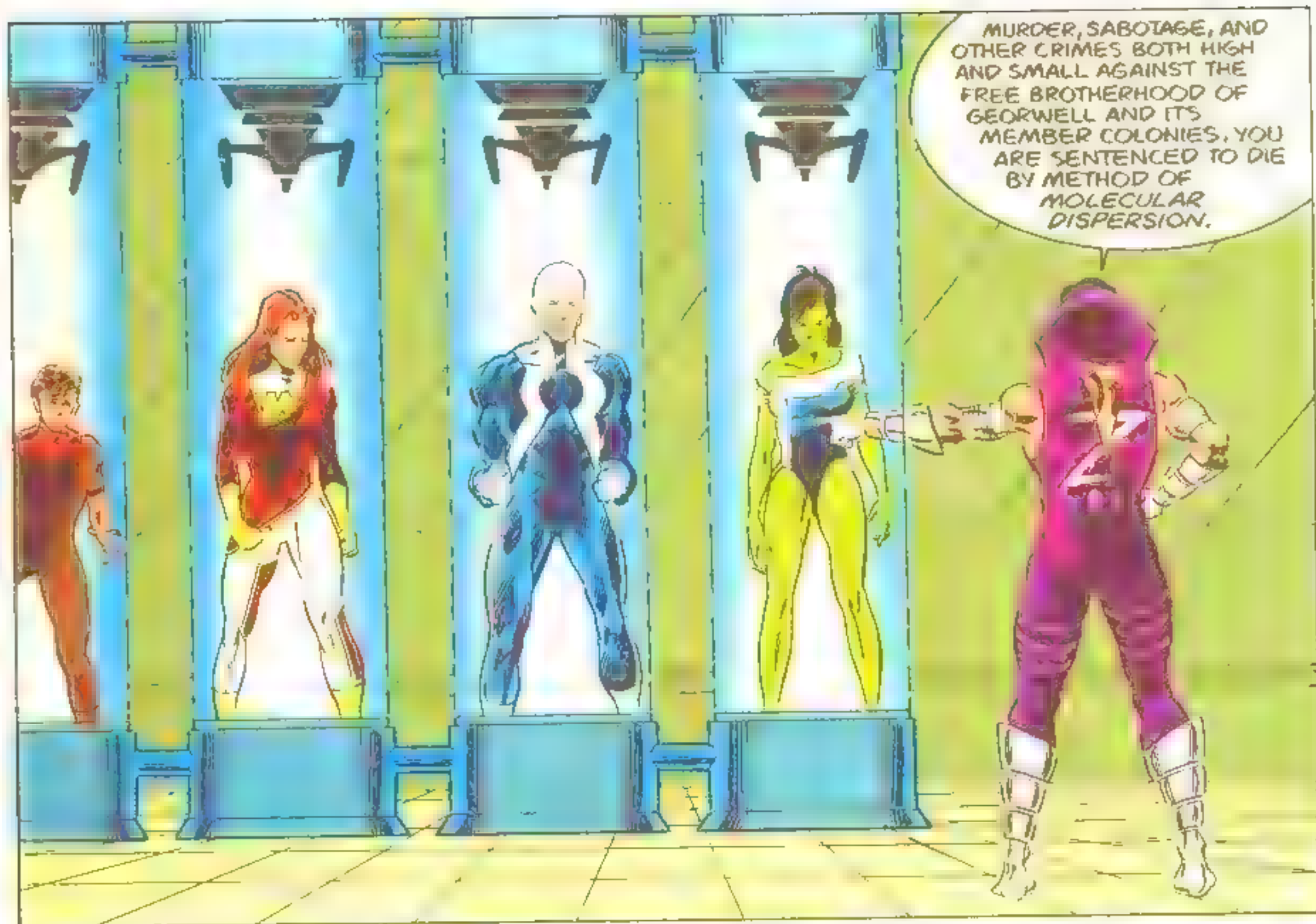


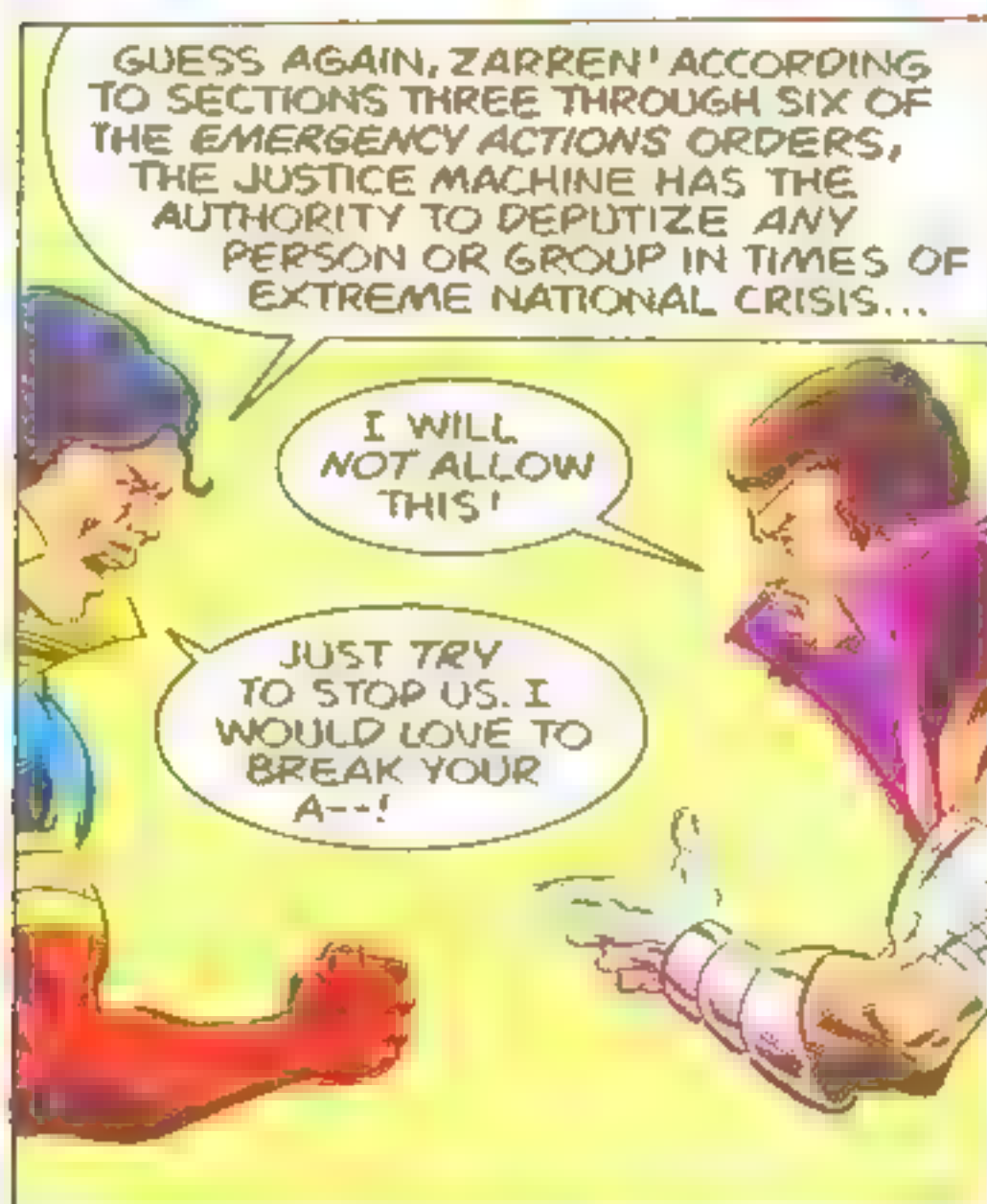
THAT'S NOT THE POINT,
BOSS. AS MUCH AS I
HATE TO TAKE THEIR
SIDE, THE
ELEMENTALS AREN'T
OUR ENEMIES.

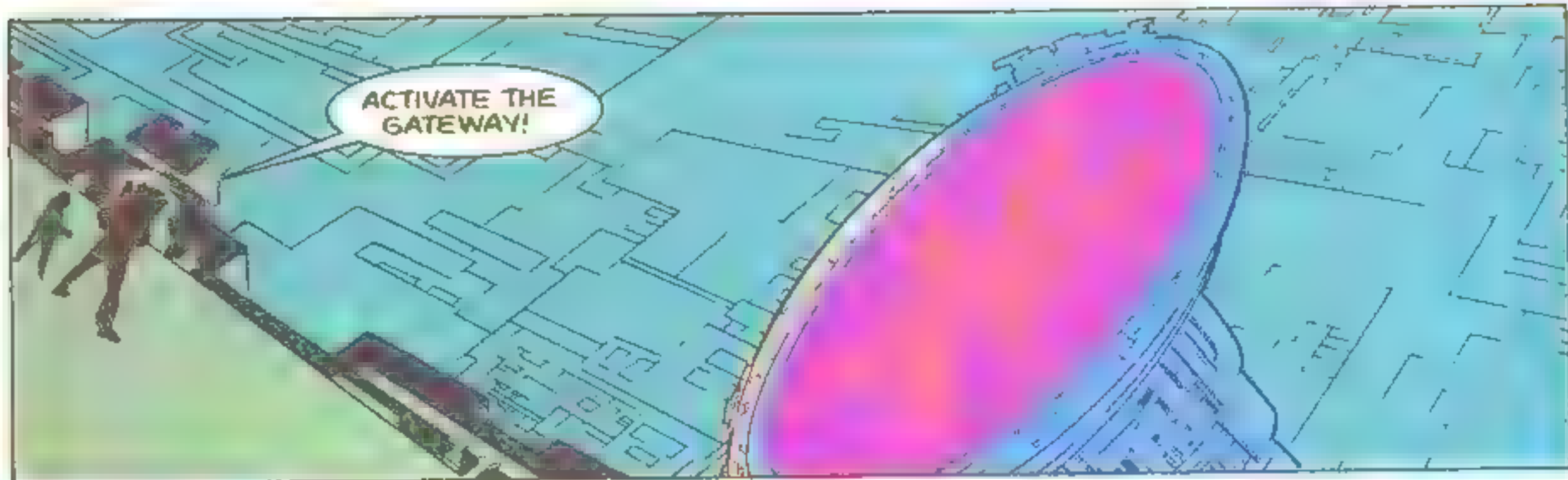
THEY'RE ABOUT
TO PAY FOR
DARKFORCE'S
CRIMES.



WHAT DO YOU
EXPECT ME TO DO?
WE HAVE AN
ASSAULT ON
DARKFORCE
TO PLAN!



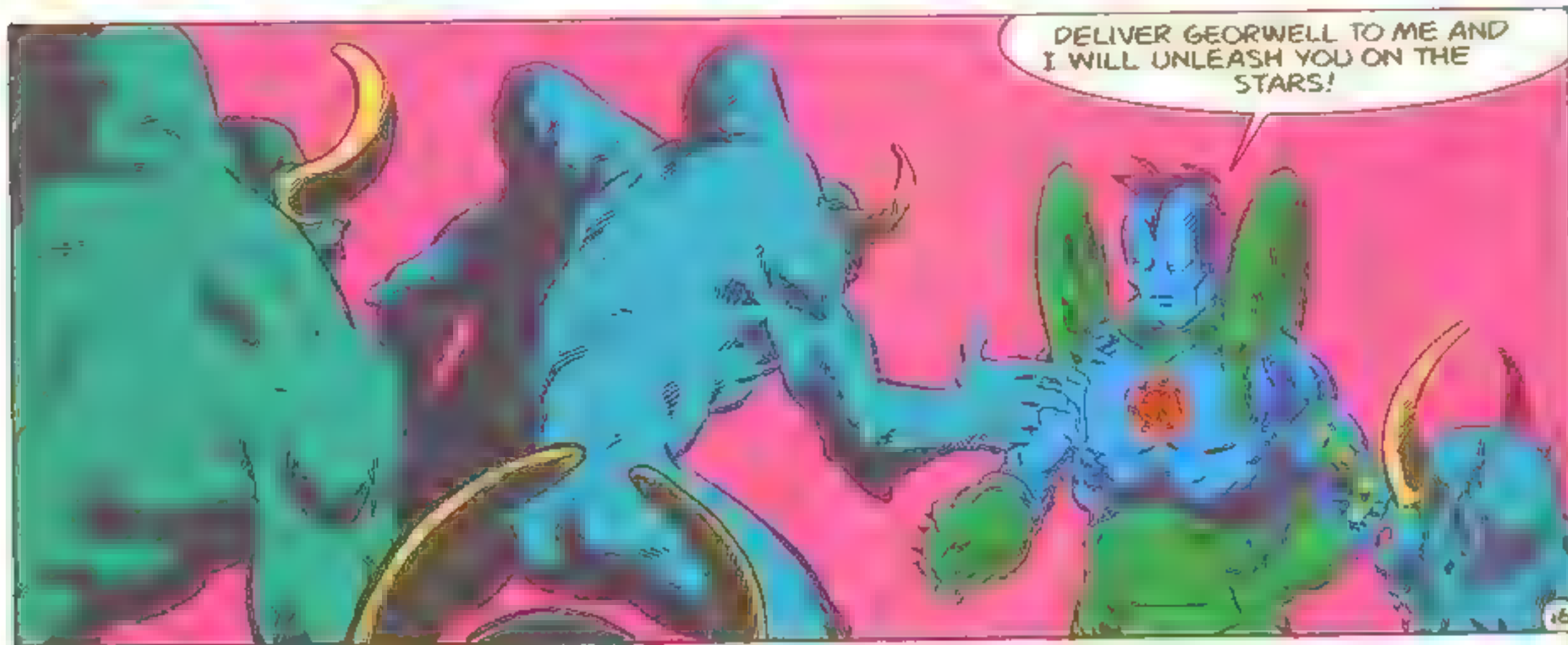




ACTIVATE THE GATEWAY!

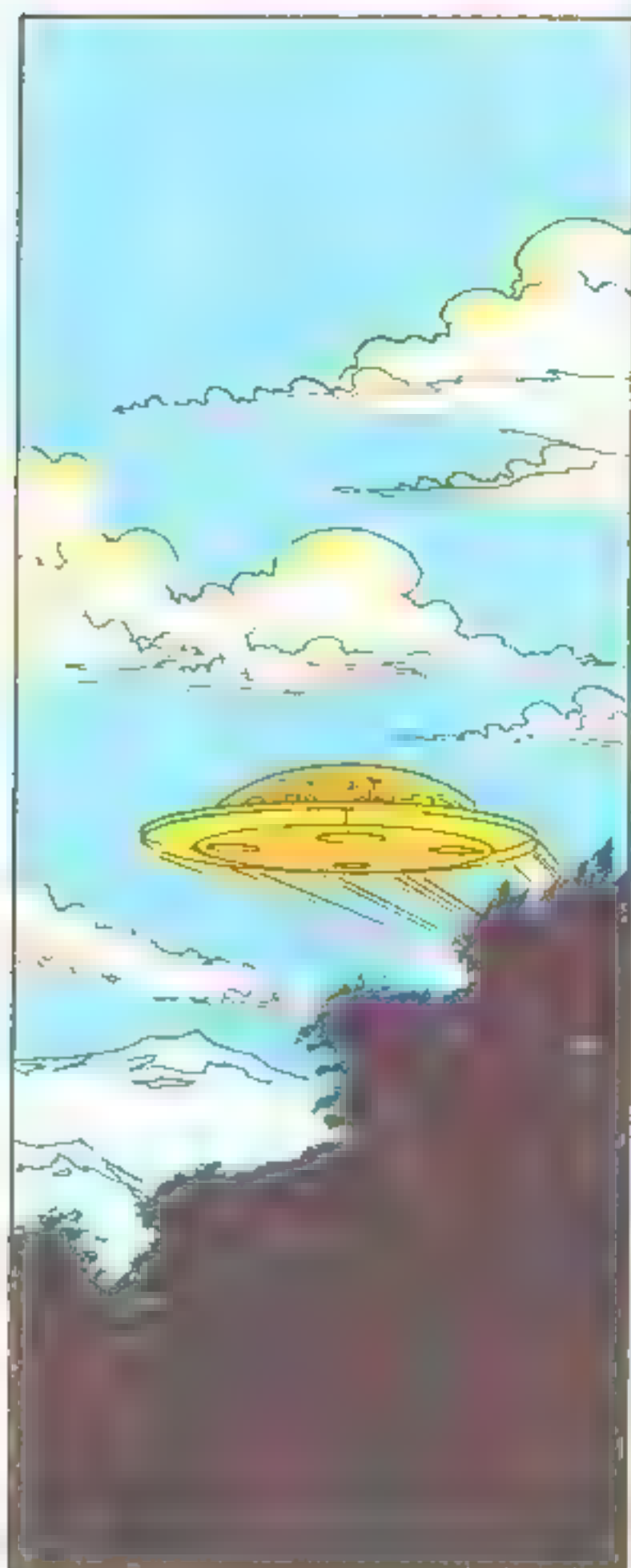
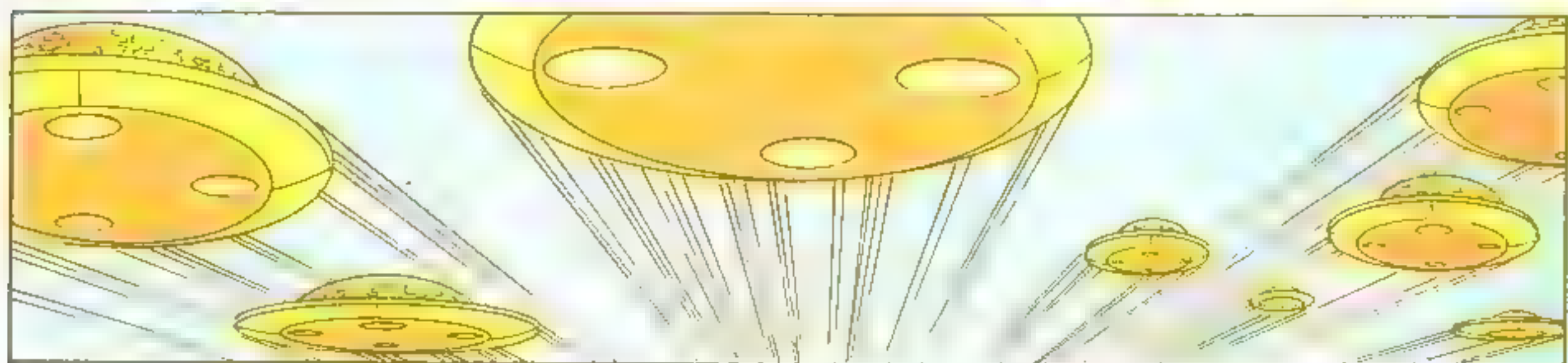


"NOW! LET THE FORCES COME THROUGH!"



DELIVER GEORWELL TO ME AND I WILL UNLEASH YOU ON THE STARS!

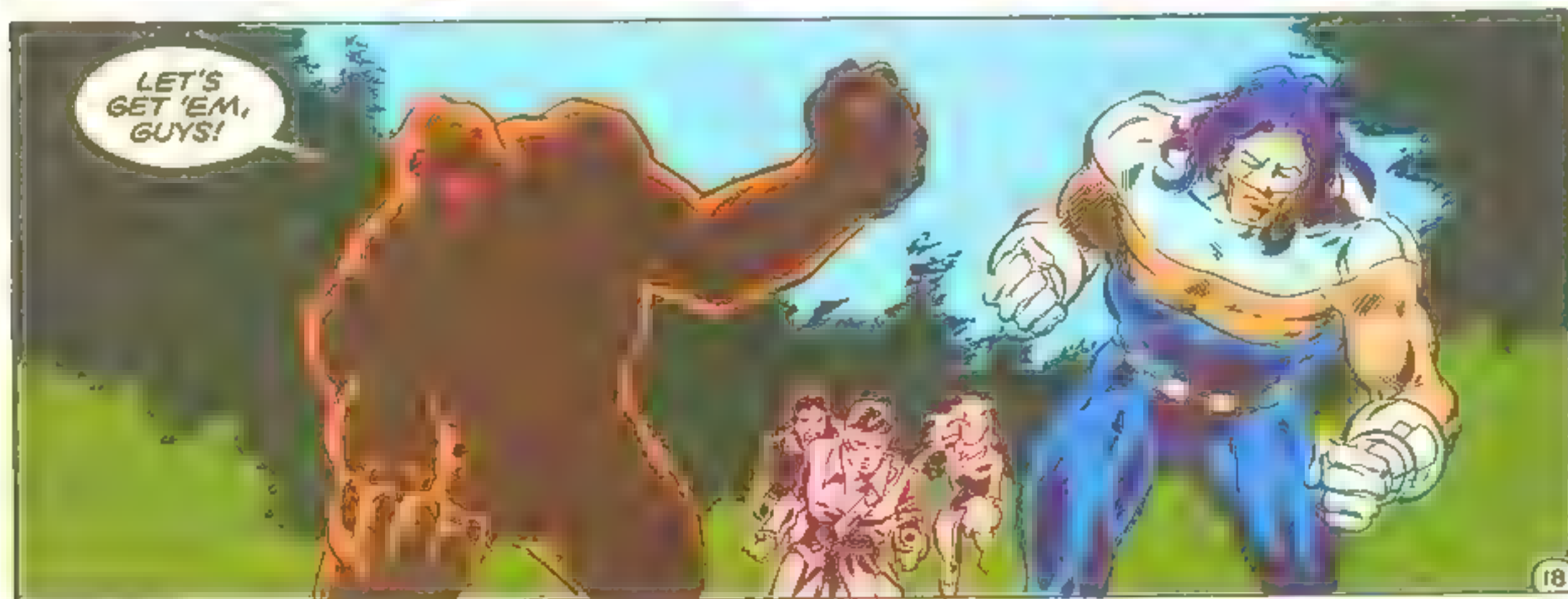
"YOU MUST REACH EVERY CORNER
OF GEORWELL WHILE THE
PEOPLE ARE STILL
IN A PANIC!"

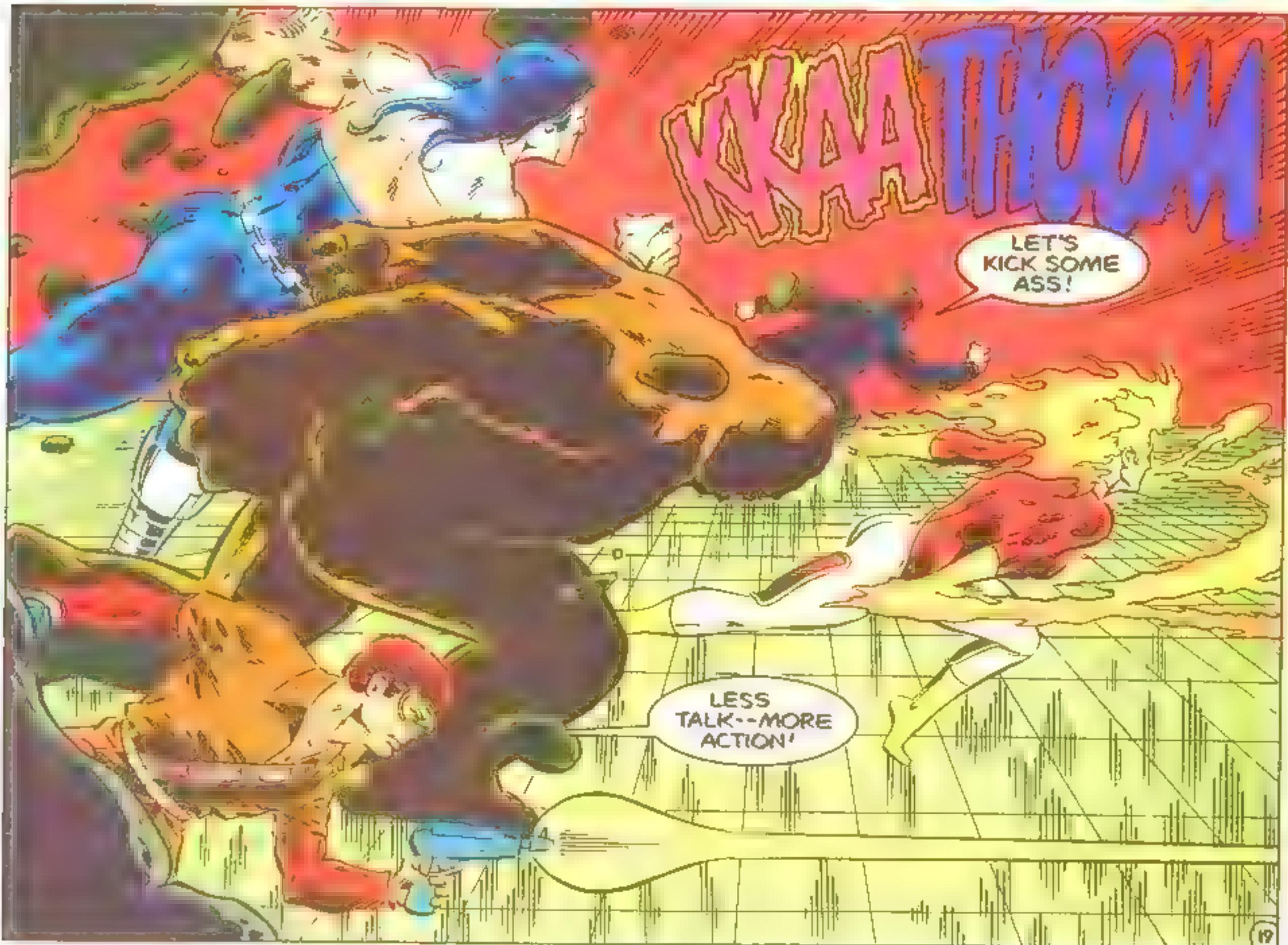


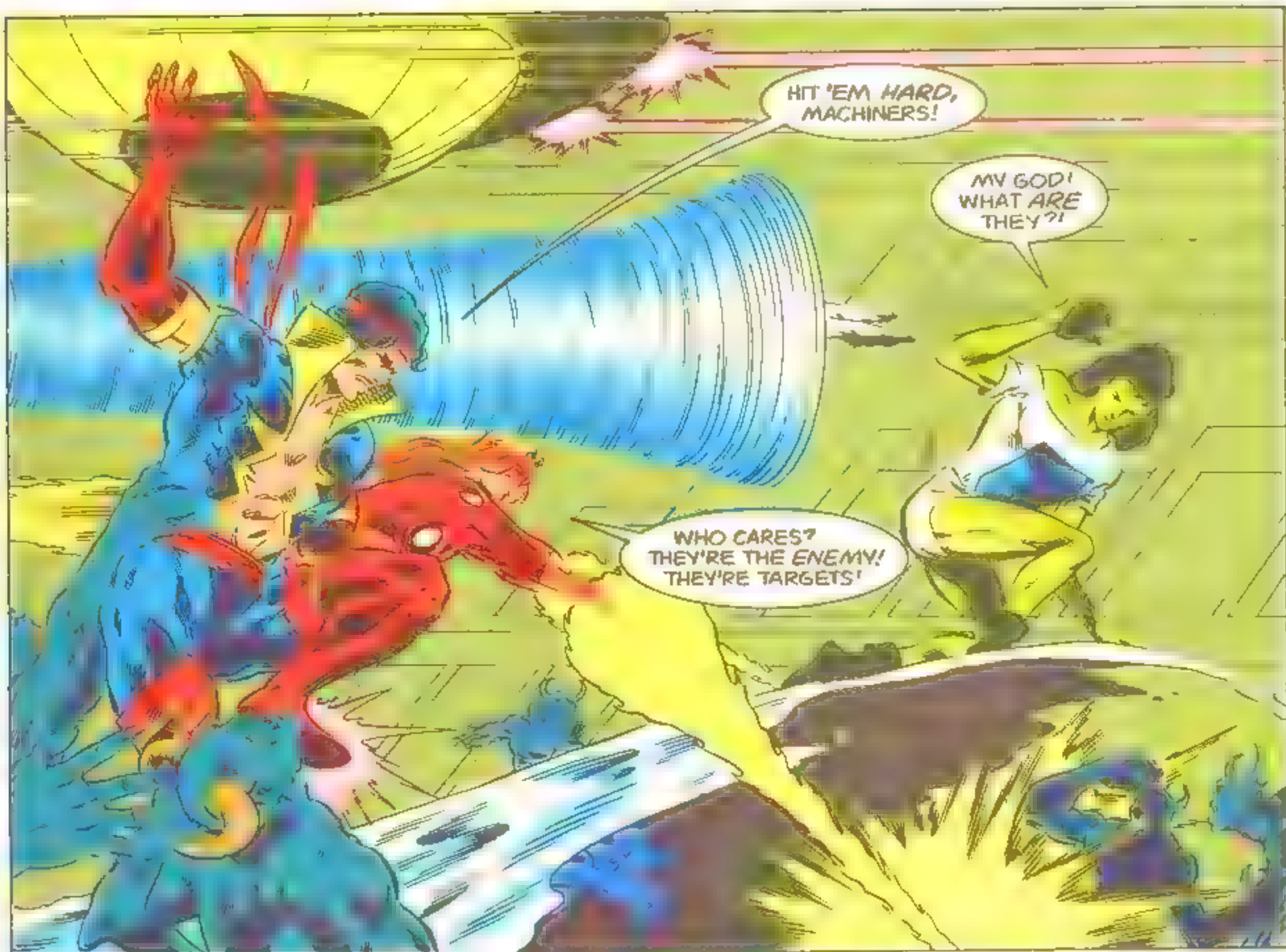
THAT'S THE
FIFTH SHIP WE'VE
LET PASS! WHEN ARE
WE GOING TO DO
SOMETHING?



THE NAVY CAN
HANDLE THOSE
SHIPS. OUR
JOB IS TO
TAKE THE
FORTRESS

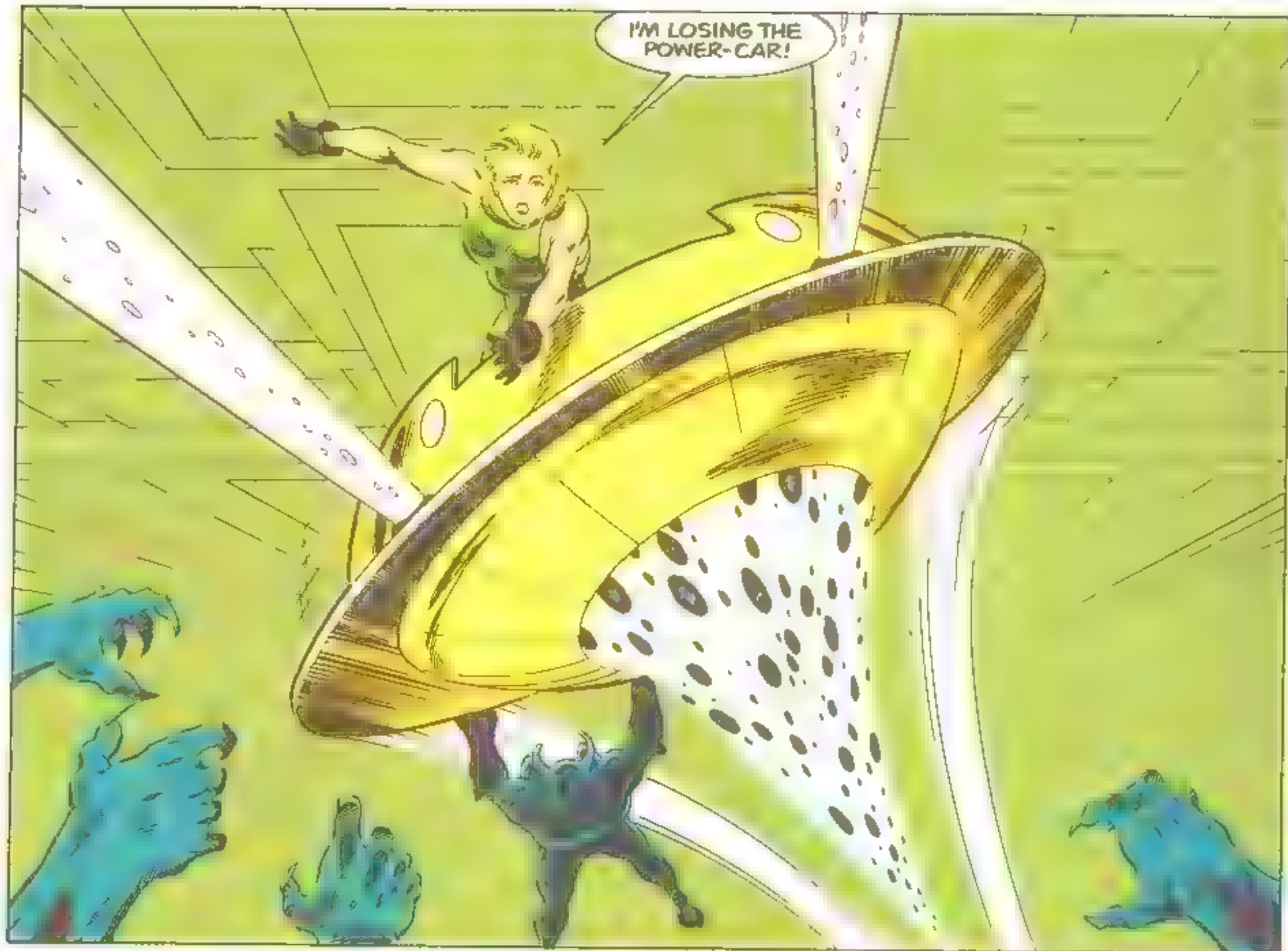












WE DID IT! WE LINKED
UP BUT WE DIDN'T PLAN
ON BRINGING SO MANY
WITH US!

WE'LL NEVER
MAKE IT THROUGH
TO DARKFORCE! WHAT
DO WE DO?!

DO...?
I GUESS
WE JUST KEEP
FIGHTING
UNTIL THEY
GET US!



DO YOU SEE,
GENERAL? TAROT?
IT IS JUST AS I
HAVE TOLD
YOU!



"THE OUTCOME OF THIS
DAY WAS WRITTEN
YEARS AGO..."



"...WHEN I BEGAN TO
PLAN MY CONQUEST
OF GEORWELL."



"THE OVERRATED JUSTICE
MACHINE IS IMPOTENT
BEFORE ME."



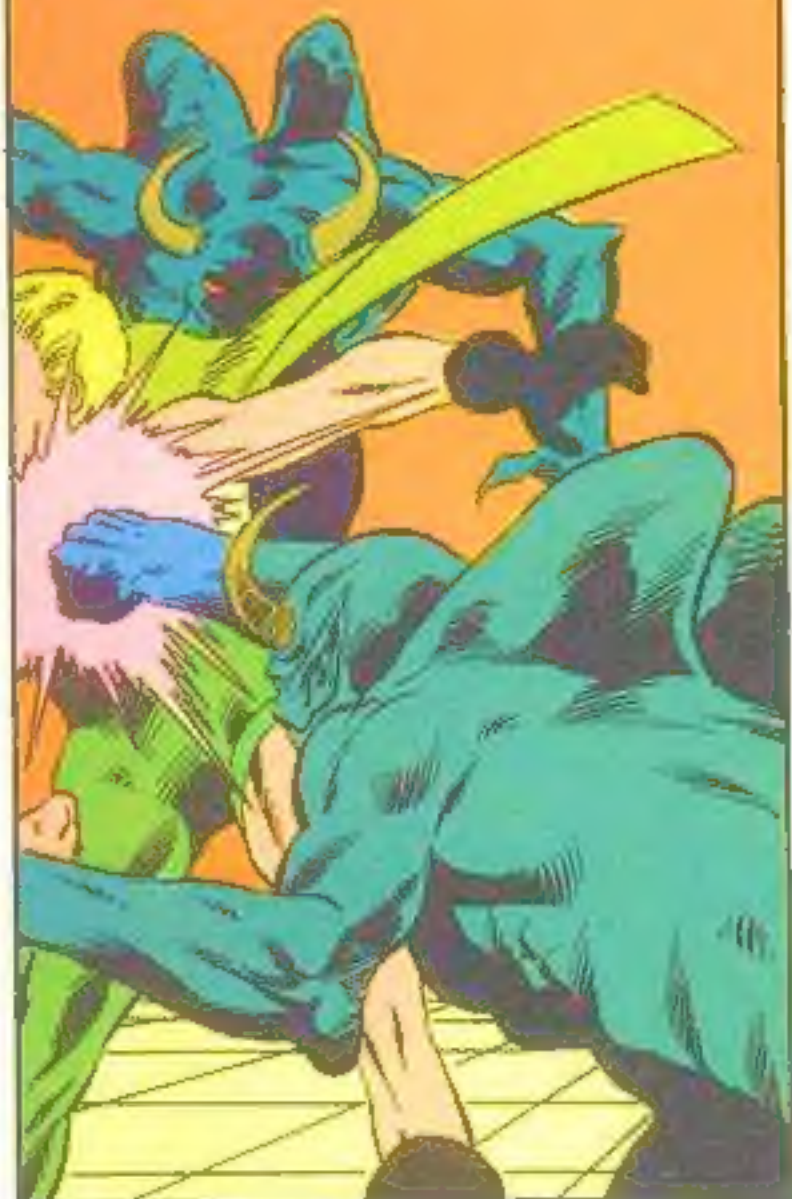
"AND NOT EVEN THE
INTERFERENCE OF
THESE... ELEMENTALS..."



"...HAS SERVED TO THWART
MY PLANS."



"IT IS OVER."



"THEY HAVE FALLEN."



"I HAVE WON THE DAY."



GEORWELL IS MINE!



TO BE CONCLUDED.

LETTERS

OF • THE • LAW

• 1547 DEKALB ST. • NORRISTOWN, PA 19401 •

As we mentioned last issue, in order to ensure a JM letters page and to get some vital feedback on our newest super-team series, we solicited the opinions of some of the industry's most dedicated and outspoken readers. The response we received was overwhelming, and as you may have noticed by now, we took some of your valuable suggestions to heart. You see, the pen is mightier than the sword—at least within the forum of comic book commentary.

This is an open forum, by the way, so if you've got something to say, let us hear it. Meanwhile . . .

Dear Comico,

JUSTICE MACHINE #1 didn't leave me terribly moved. I was moved—just not terribly.

Please forgive my ignorance concerning the Machine's background, but it left question marks over my head throughout much of the issue, nevertheless. So, while the opening assault by the Machine worked as a visual intro to their abilities, I would have preferred some further insight into the team's origin and past. A deeper look at the workings of Georwell would've been nice too, but then again, this is only the first issue. It came off as sort of a "teaser" issue—a risky practice, but it guarantees a return for the remainder of the series.

Because of the showcase nature of this issue, characterization seemed slighted somewhat. While I agree that forced characterization can fail (humans aren't really that easy to figure out), we also have only four issues to get to know and hopefully grow to like these people. Talisman intrigues me the most. Not only does he look unheroic, but "Get me out of here!" in the heat of battle? Very interesting.

Mike Gustovich's artwork has the necessary shine a team book needs. This is some of his best work, probably due to his love for his creations. Nice costume designs, too.

As a team, I have not learned enough about the Justice Machine to give my undying loyalty. But as a story, issue #1 impressed me enough to be back next issue. And that's really the bottom line, isn't it? Thank you for the sneak peek.

Carleton K. Brown
Springfield, MA

—Hopefully by now, Carleton, you (and any other readers who missed the Noble issues of JUSTICE MACHINE) have gotten somewhat more insight into the team's background—make sure to check out last issue's editorial in this regard. Some good news is that you will have more than these four issues to scope out the Machiners, since a regular JM series will debut later this year with artist Mike Gustovich and writer Tony Isabella at the creative helm. Stay tuned for details . . .

Dear Guys,

First of all, thanks a lot for making me one of the chosen few to review JUSTICE MACHINE FEATURING THE ELEMENTALS! My verdict is that I enjoyed it very much! Being not very familiar with any of the characters, I found it very easy to follow and exciting to get into! My only regret is that I didn't get to see it in full color, but hey, Mike Gustovich's use of blacks and whites was terrific! It was great to see you taking advantage of full-page spreads. I loved the opening battle scene(s), especially when Darkforce staggers and plunges forward on page 13. Personalities came through beautifully with Bill Willingham's script. Favorites were the vanishing act on page 17, and Monica's comment about Lois Lane on page 18. Both supergroups are fascinating enough to make me wanna see more. Keep up the good work, and I'll be looking for it on the stands!

Neil Ahlquist
Columbia Heights, MN

Dear Editor,

Well, I, for one, am very glad to see the Justice Machine back in action and lookin' good.

"The Darkforce Affair" was a nice story to start the ball rolling at Comico. I'm not going to go on about the art or the story, like most letters of comment. What I want to talk about is the dialogue and the way the main characters move with each other.

Bill Willingham has a very nice way with the speech patterns of the Justice

Machine. They talk like most normal people would. Believe it or not, that's rare in an action-adventure comic book. If you don't believe me, just pick up a book written by Marv Wolfman or Chris Claremont. Those two are about the worst with common folk dialogue. The Justice Machine members speak in short, no frills dialogue. When a person is engaged in a lot of action, there isn't a lot of time for chatter. Ask anybody who's been through some military training or, for that matter, any kind of physical training. You'll find that you can't shoot the breeze and thump the guy at the same time. Another thing that I liked about the way Bill did things was the fact that there were no lecture speeches by the heroes or the bad boys. I have found that these "Let-me-tell-you-the-history-of-all-living-beings-while-I-clean-your-clock" speeches are the most boring things to have to read. Don't get me wrong. Everything was not sunshine and roses. I did not like the way the members of the team kept mentioning different maneuvers during a fight. This reminded me too much of the X-Men's famous "Alley-Oop" move with Wolverine and Colossus.

Another thing that I would have liked to have seen was no Elementals in the series. Why? Because I think that the Justice Machine, along with the creative team, has enough strength to make the series work without riding on the coat-tails of the popular Elementals.

I lied. I am going to say something about the artwork. At the Chicago Comicon I got to see Mike Gustovich do some work and talk to the readers. I was impressed with his fast work without losing quality and his good nature towards the fans. When I see Mike's work, I see a lot of Kirby and Steranko influences along with Mike's own style. That ain't bad company to run with.

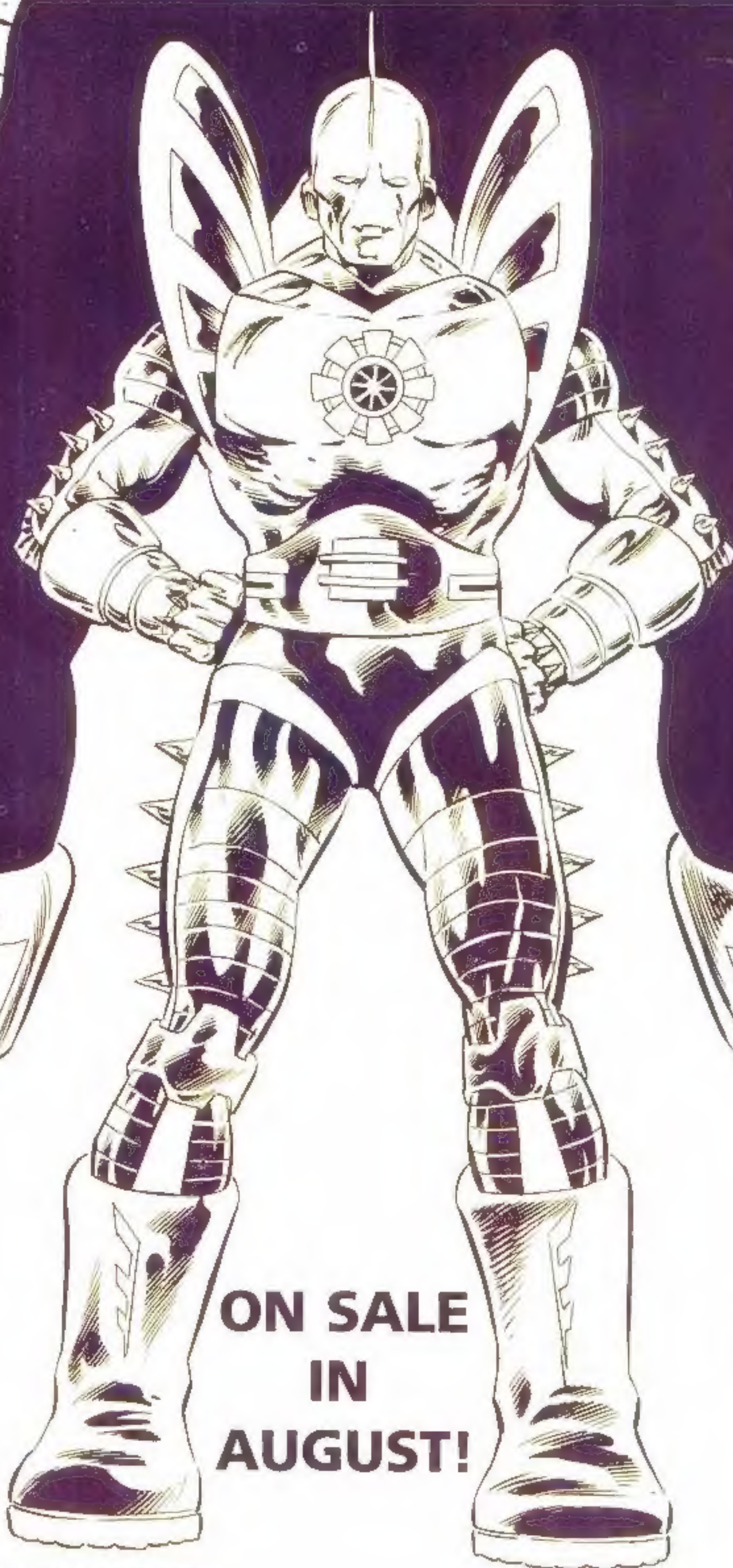
I wish you all luck and good fortune with the JUSTICE MACHINE. I'll be here watching the progress.

Stay outta trouble,
Stephen Scott Beau Smith
COMICAST, Inc.
Huntington, WV

—And we'll be looking for all of you next issue, when this dramatic limited series reaches its electrifying conclusion and we print the last of the many insightful and candid letters commenting on JM #1. See you in 30.

Who is DARKFORCE?

Find out in *JUSTICE MACHINE* featuring the *ELEMENTALS* #4.



**ON SALE
IN
AUGUST!**

